Advantages of a Formal Communication Plan

by

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A thesis submitted to the school of Webster University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Communications Management (MA).

December, 2018

St. Louis, Missouri

Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank my family for supporting me for the past two and a half years. I wasn't going to get a Master's Degree, and then I did. I also wasn't planning on being a full-time student, and then at the start of 2018 I did. My family has supported me through late nights of homework, not showing up to family gatherings, leaving events early, and a full-on anxiety attack that sent me to the hospital. I do this in large part for them, and I wouldn't be able to do this without them. I would like to thank Michael Cottam for pushing me for many years to get my Master's Degree. Who knew it would be so helpful? He did. I would also like to thank Webster University for giving me the chance to receive my Master's Degree while being employed. I have been able to realize a goal that I thought to be very much out of reach. I would like to thank my instructors who worked with me while I was frantically trying to balance being a full-time student, a full-time employee, a husband, and a father. Lastly, I would like to thank God. For some reason at the end of 2017, I felt the strong impression to attend school full-time instead of taking my time, as that was the plan. At the outset of this year, I honestly didn't believe that I had it in me to get through this year. I was reassured and have received insight and help when it has been needed, and for that I am thankful.

Abstract

Academic institutions around the United States are continually looking for ways to increase enrollments. Among the many strategies employed are information sessions in reference to specific academic programs. These information sessions provide an opportunity for academic institutions to communicate with potential students about specific academic programs that they are directly interested in. These public relations efforts, in the form of targeted campaigns, have the potential to drive enrollment for intended academic programs.

Many of these campaigns are run in an almost haphazard manner. That is, assets are designed, social media posts are made, and emails are sent out with little planning. This often yields minimal interest in information sessions. The goal of this research is to apply formal communication planning strategies to public relations campaigns for awareness of academic program information sessions to drive enrollment for specific academic programs. The goal is to prove the useful and positive application of formal communication planning as it relates to awareness of, and enrollment in, academic programs.

This was accomplished through secondary research by researching and reviewing the structure and intention of communication planning and public relations campaigns, and how they interact with organizational strategies and goals. This information was then developed into a rubric, which was be used to gauge the effectiveness of campaigns intended to drive enrollment to specific academic programs.

Additionally, two distinct campaigns, both for the same objective of broadening the enrollment funnel by making prospective students aware of an academic information session webinar, were reviewed as case studies. One case study ran a campaign without using a formal

communication plan, and the other was run with a formal communication plan. This was done to compare the results of each of those efforts, and to prove the effectiveness of, and need for, a formal communication plan for these purposes.

Through examining results based on the grading rubric, the research highlights the importance of having a formal communication plan for academic program information session campaigns. The campaign run with a formal communication plan performed ~28% better based on rubric grading. This highlights the need for having a formal communication plan as outlined in the following research. This research has implications for admissions and enrollment efforts and processes at academic institutions around the United States.

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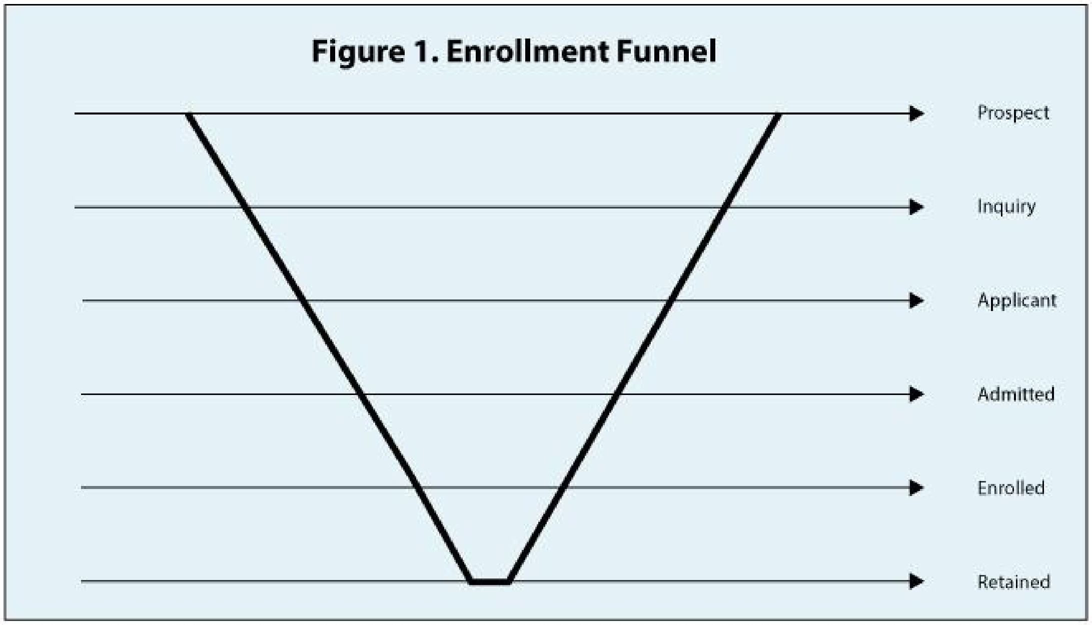
Chapter 1: Introduction

Situation Analysis

Webster University (and other academic institutions in general) will often host information sessions based around their academic programs as a strategy to drive and increase enrollment. These information sessions are meant to raise awareness of academic programs and to introduce potential students to these academic programs. “An information session is an open meeting scheduled by an organization. These sessions, hosted in a classroom or space on campus, allow the organization to meet with potential candidates in a more informal setting. Most organizations present on their company and opportunities and allow interested students to ask questions and meet with their recruiters” (Penn State). As an example, The University of Arizona College of Nursing hosts information sessions about their Nursing programs (The University of Arizona College of Nursing). Webster University has begun to host information sessions about selected programs as well, starting with an information session on their Paralegal academic program, and moving to their Cybersecurity academic programs.

Many academic institutions use the metaphor of an enrollment funnel to visualize their admissions process. “The enrollment funnel is a metaphor used to categorize the stages prospective students move through on their path to enrolling at a university” (Stonybrook University). By understanding the stages of the enrollment funnel universities can develop strategies and tactics that are useful for that stage. Following is a typical representation of an enrollment funnel:



At the top of the enrollment process are prospective students. As the funnel progresses downward, so does the enrollment process of students. The number of individuals in each phase of the enrollment funnel also decreases. Each phase of the enrollment process requires different strategies and tactics.

According to Stonybrook University, the prospect stage of the enrollment funnel “Help build brand awareness and expand our pool of inquiries for future classes.” At this stage of the enrollment process, students are prospects, and have not yet inquired about the university.

Moving down the enrollment funnel, the inquiry stage is next. At this stage in the enrollment funnel, students have inquired about the university. They may have done this through a Request for Information form (RFI), or they may have contacted an admission counselor, or been contacted by the university in some way, and given their information to the university. At this phase students have expressed interest, and the university has strategies to employ.

In an effort to engage potential students at the prospect and inquiry phases of the enrollment funnel, and to raise awareness about targeted academic programs, Webster University runs information sessions about particular academic programs. These information sessions are held online and are often referred to as webinars. The term webinar combines the terms “web” and “seminar”.   Webinars are “generally presented by an expert in a given field, who talks about a topic usually for about an hour, as slides are shown on the screen. Participants access the webinar via the Internet, and there is usually a way to ask questions and for the presenter to respond” (Friesen 74). These webinars may be attended live, or they may be recorded and played back later. The advantage of attending live is the ability to ask questions and receive answers, while the advantage of watching on-demand at a later date is convenience.

To raise awareness about these information sessions, Webster University runs campaigns to facilitate registration for these information sessions. These campaigns seek to inform potential students of webinars about particular academic programs and act “as a final enrollment push for the coming term” (Webster University). These campaigns run by Webster University are designed and run by employees of the organization and have been carried out with various degrees of cohesion and success.

The process for running these academic program information sessions is relatively new, as the first one was offered on September 27^{th}, 2018 (Webster University). There have been two academic program information session campaigns run for Webster University. The first was for the Paralegal academic program, the second one was for the Cybersecurity academic programs available at Webster University.

The campaign for the webinar regarding the Paralegal academic program did not include a formal communication plan. The campaign for the webinar regarding the Cybersecurity academic programs was run with a formal communication plan.

Premise Statement

This research will prove that academic program information session campaigns run with a formal communication plan are more effective at achieving their goals than those that are run without formal communication plans.

Limitations

There are limitations to consider when reflecting on this research. First, this research will be confined to two distinct academic program information sessions. While research reveals (and will be detailed later) that these programs are in demand in today's workforce, response to these campaigns may be, in part, driven by interest in the subject matter of the information session webinars themselves.

While this research will detail a formal communication plan with associated strategies and tactics, it does not go into detail about the merits of particular strategies and tactics. This research is intended to prove that the existence of a formal communication plan is effective in achieving stated goals, rather than analyzing the merits of specific strategies and tactics involved in running campaigns for academic program information sessions.

While this research will reveal results of both of the academic program campaigns, it does not examine in detail the psychology behind decision making, and how these campaigns were successful beyond the existence of a formal campaign plan. There may be factors beyond the existence of a formal communication plan that will not be examined in depth.

This research will not establish which graphic design methodologies and aspects of graphic design are more effective at gaining the attention of the viewer for a campaign. While aspects of graphic design such as readability are important to consider, they will not be discussed, nor will graphic design approaches be critiqued. The effectiveness of graphic design in campaigns is beyond the scope of this research.

Given that this research project, from thesis generation through research, writing, editing, and submission, needs to be completed in nine weeks, this research will be limited in scope and study. This constraint on time also constrains the type of research that is done; meaning research is all secondary research and not primary.

Both case studies involved in this study are constrained by the teams who worked on them. The teams performed the campaigns are part of their daily jobs. As such, there were other priorities and projects that were attended to, and so the environment in which these case studies were completed were not purely reserved for these tasks.

The case study involving the Cybersecurity information session in particular ended up being released late, and so it did not get the full campaign treatment that was intended at the outset. This is discussed in the results and further discussed in the conclusion and recommendation sections as well. Not being able to have the full amount of time dedicated to the running of the campaign meant that the campaign was run for a shorter amount of time than was originally planned in the communication plan.

Leads, traffic, reach, and conversion data is only based on the expectations of Webster University, and not based on standards. As the number of social media "followers" varies from organization to organization, the leads, traffic, reach, and conversion generated as a result of campaign efforts will need further refining as Webster University's processes mature.

The rubric developed for this research can and should be further refined, with development in the application and performance of strategies and tactics. As this particular research did not include the application of specific strategies and tactics, it was not included. This research concentrated in the need for having a formal communication plan in place, and the rubric, as it is, reflects the intent of research. It should be considered a prototype to be improved upon.

Methodology

Secondary Research

This research will consist entirely of secondary research. The research compiled for this research paper will come from several sources. Background information and data will be collected from internet resources, the Webster University online library resources, and from textbooks used in the Communication Management graduate degree program. Information gathered will include definition and background information, as well as information that connects the sections of a formal communication plan to organizational strategy. Data about communication plans and campaigns in general will also be gathered.

Additionally, information will be gathered from two case studies involving campaigns that were run for academic programs at Webster University. This information will include gathering information from a Paralegal academic program information session campaign that was run without a formal communication plan and formalizing it into research data. It will also include information from a Cybersecurity academic program information session campaign that was run with a formal communication plan. The information will be gathered from various reports made available after the completion of these campaigns. There will also be information gathered from planning documents and will include the formal communication plan itself for the Cybersecurity information session campaign.

Information gathered will also be directed at Webster University specifically. This information will include information about Webster University's various strategic plans, goals, and available reports. Information gathered about Webster University will also include information about the pertinent academic programs that are being discussed in this research. This information will be gathered from Webster University's website and various reports.

Primary Research

This research project will not include any primary research and will instead rely on secondary research.

Chapter 2: Background

The following background information is presented as context to the later case studies and subsequent results and conclusion. Having an understanding of communications plans and how they interact with an organization's stated goals and strategy execution helps to clarify their need. Having information regarding campaign plans helps to inform the processes and considerations that go into the crafting of communication plans. Knowing how success will be measured at the outset of a project helps to inform the entire process. Thus, background information will be presented on the essentials of communications planning, considerations for campaign planning, and considerations for measuring success will be presented.

Public Relations

It is important to recognize the role of public relations within the context of an awareness campaign. Austin and Pinkleton note that advertising "typically focuses on selling products to consumers through controlled placement of paid media messages"; marketing "often uses public relations techniques to sell products and services" (5); and public relations helps "organizations develop and preserve the variety of stakeholder relationship that ensure long-term success" (5). This means that public relations activities affect and target more stakeholders than a singular intended singular audience of a marketing or advertising campaign to sell a good or service. Public Relations is part of a larger strategy, and often encompasses marketing and advertising. Understanding this aspect of communication helps to contextualize the use of awareness campaigns.

Wilson and Ogden state that planning occurs at two different levels: short-term and long-term. “Long-term planning looks at the entirety of the organization and its mission. It identifies goals, objectives, publics, and messages” (78) that affect the long-term health of an organization. Wilson and Ogden further state that short-term planning “is designed to target more immediate needs such as managing a crisis, launching a new product line, and repairing a damaged reputation” (79). Thus, we see that short-term public relations activities are influenced by long-term organizational goals. Short-term public relations activities are activities such as the communication plans that will be discussed in this project.

The communication plan, as will be discussed, is the practical application of strategic public relations management for short-term execution. By focusing on long-term organizational goals and public relations strategies, as opposed to focusing on purely advertising or marketing activities, an organization can have a strategic and holistic approach to public relations activities, such as campaigns to raise awareness of information sessions for academic programs, as discussed in this project.

Communication Plan Essentials

At a minimum, a Communication Plan defines the what, how, when, and who of a particular strategic communication. The purpose of a Communication Plan is “to define who needs to be aware of and informed about the project, how and how often information will be distributed, and who will be responsible for the distribution” (The University of Missouri System’s Strategic Project Management Office). Further, The University of Missouri System’s

Strategic Project Management Office states that a good plan should address the following relevant topics:

- What information will be communicated?
- How will the information be communicated?
- When will the information be distributed?
- What will be communicated? Are there standard templates or formats that must be considered?

Communications plans are formed for many reasons. They may be formed for advertising campaigns (such is the case for this research). They may also be formed for internal organizational communications, for emergency communications, or any number of instances that require communication. As communication plans have a broad application, different contexts can be examined, finding common needs for each context of communications plans. A study of the application of communications planning reveals common needs.

Pollack and Pollack discussion of John Kotter's eight-stage model for successful organizational change highlights facets that are relevant to a broad application of public relations and communications planning. Pollack and Pollack (2015) give the following breakdown of Kotter's eight-stage model.

- Phase one: Establishing a sense of urgency – Kotter defines the need to change, the sense of urgency "to be the biggest error made when trying to change organisations" (Pollack, J. , Pollack, R. 55).
- Phase two: Creating the Guiding Coalition – This stage "involves forming a group who have enough power to lead the change" (56).

- Phase three: Develop and Vision and Strategy – Both the vision and the strategy of the plan must be developed and will be contextual to the situation (57)
- Phase four: Communicating the Change Vision – “Kotter notes that managers underestimate the amount of communication required to develop a consistent understanding” (57). Communication plays a vital role.
- Phase five: Empowering broad-based change – Pollack and Pollack state that the fifth stage involves removing obstacles, changing systems that undermine the vision, and encouraging innovative ideas (58)
- Phase six: Generating short-term wins – Momentum can be built by taking advantage of short-term wins (59).
- Phase seven: Consolidating gains and producing more change – By taking advantage of momentum and putting short-term wins to work, they can be consolidated into larger change, which produces synergy for more change (60).
- Phase eight: Anchoring new approaches in the culture – Continual change will help the culture adopt and anchor new approaches (60)

While not every phase is directly applicable, they are at least important to consider within a public relations context. As can be seen from this eight-stage model, there are many ideas worthy of consideration in relation to the practice of communication planning. As can be noted from Kotter’s eight stage model, the need to change must be identified and communicated. Having a vision and strategy guides the intent and content of the communication. Understanding the effort involved in a given communication plan or campaign plan must be understood as well. These are all relevant aspects of a communication plan.

It becomes evident, when examining these phases of change, that communication is an integral aspect of supporting business strategies. Niels Van Hove states that a communication plan "needs to address the right stakeholders with the right information, through the right channel, at the right time. Communication is central to successful strategy execution and improved business performance" (6). A communication plan does more than formally define the what, how, when, and who of a particular communication. It is also a vehicle for aligning strategic communications with organizational strategies and goals.

A communication plan typically includes the following sections. Each of the sections of a communication plan are informed by the strategic goals of the organization and should each inform the other sections of the communication plan itself. A brief discussion of each section follows.

- Situation Analysis/Background

    "The situation analysis is a detailed explanation of the opportunities and challenges that exist within the organization and in its environment" (Austin and Pinkleton). Essentially, the situation analysis is a description of what needs to be addressed. Ronald Smith underscores the importance that everybody involved in the project is "in solid agreement about the nature of the opportunity or obstacle to be addressed in this program" (15). The situation analysis puts everybody in agreement about what is to be accomplished. This helps to ensure alignment between the campaign and organizational strategy and goals.

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

The SWOT Analysis is the analysis of situation being described in the Situation Analysis/Background. The Situation Analysis/Background and SWOT sections of a Communication Plan work together to provide context to the rest of the communication plan. Having this information helps to provide guidance for the rest of the communication plan itself. The Situation Analysis/Background is information that informs the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis "offers a simple way of communicating about your initiative or program and an excellent way to organize information that you've gathered from studies or surveys" (University of Kansas).

- Goal(s)

The goal(s) section helps to identify the goals of the communication plan and ensures alignment for all other information for the rest of the communication plan. "The goal is essentially a set of declared intentions that together negate the problem" (Austin and Pinkleton). The problem is outlined in the Situation Analysis/Background section, which relates directly to the organizational goals and strategies. Having a clearly defined goal ensures organizational alignment.

Wilson and Ogden discuss the goal of a project to show the International Olympic Committee that Utah was supportive of hosting the Olympics. Even though support ran high in the state, close to 80%, the vote margin to approve it was slim. The goal of the project was to create clever commercials to give people a good feeling about hosting the Olympics. They did this, but the ads never asked people to go vote, so they didn't. The goal needed to reflect the need to have the public vote to support the Olympics being held in Salt Lake City. While the vote still passed, the committee had to explain to the

International Olympic Committee each time why the vote was so slim (79). Setting accurate goals informs the rest of the project.

- Key Publics

Key publics are those that the communication plan will communicate with. Having these identified ensures that messages are on topic, and all strategies and tactics are relevant for the intended audience. “A single communication campaign cannot promise to improve a company’s reputation among every individual in the world” (Austin and Pinkleton).

- Research

The research section ensures that if research is needed, that it has been done. The research will inform the communication plan details. “Professionals embraced research as vital for proving that public relations programs are effective, but less than half agreed that research is accepted as an important part of public relations” (Austin and Pinkleton). To remain strategic, research must be carried out and applied to the communication plan.

Research extends beyond the needs of the current communication plan as well. Research includes findings from previous communications plans; understanding what strategies and tactics have worked in the past or how has the organization performed the tasks related to a campaign.

An organization’s tactics may be innovative and creative, but without proper research, messages may be of little value to the key publics that they are intended for and bring limited value to the organization. This need for research that is focused on strategy will align the situation analysis with organizational goals.

- Objectives

"Objectives are numbered or bulleted statements of specific results that will lead to the achievement of the goal" (Wilson and Ogden 78). Objectives reflect the list of tasks that need to be done in order for the stated goal to be met. Wilson and Ogden state the following eight criteria that objectives should meet:

They should be (1) specific. Specific objectives are free from ambiguity. They should be (2) written. When objectives are published, everybody can claim knowledge of them, without any organizational confusion. Objectives should be (3) measurable. Objectives should be quantifiable, being able to measure the outcomes. They should be (4) obtainable. Being able to stretch to reach goals is important and will show leadership that the project reflects not just busy work, but also growth. Objectives should be (5) time-based. Every objective needs to have a due date. They should be (6) const-conscious. There should be a budget taken into consideration, with smart strategies that look for low cost options. Objectives should be (7) efficient. Objectives should help to point the easiest way to reach the stated goal. Last, objectives should be (8) mission-driven. When objectives are in line with a communication plan goal that is in turn in line with organizational goals, objectives are mission-driven (82).

- Strategies

Wilson and Ogden state that strategies are public-specific in that the key public is identified before the strategy, as strategies are directed towards specific key publics

(127). Seth Godin uses an example of a real estate broker. The stated goal of a real estate broker could be to get more leads, with key publics being different groups within the community, other real estate agents, and clients. Her strategy could be to be the most trusted person in town. There are a number of tactics that could be employed in support of the strategy of being the most trusted person in town. "Strategy is for the long haul" (Goden).

- Tactics

Wilson and Ogden use the metaphor of tools to describe tactics. Tactics are "the hammer, nails, lumber and paint – you need to build a successful campaign" (138). Returning to Godin's example of a real estate broker above, tactics can be employed to support the strategy of being the most trusted person in town. "There are then 100 tactics that she can use to earn that trust. She can coordinate events, sponsor teams, host community meetings in her office, support the local baseball team, be transparent about her earnings, hire countless summer interns at a fair wage, run seminars at the local library, etc. Thus, we have Godin's final thought on the matter "tactics are disposable. Strategy is for the long haul."

- Timeline

While the previous sections of the communication plan are driven by organizational goals and strategies, the timeline and budget sections are mainly project management related. Having these components to a communication plan are vital. Resources that are required for the successful execution of a communication plan need to be managed.

The Project Management Institute's yearly publication regarding the state of the industry states that "maturing value capabilities" is one of the three most important things regarding project management when it comes to helping organizations execute projects effectively and efficiently. The Project Management Institute states "value delivery capabilities are the full spectrum of competencies that enable organizations to deliver their projects and programs." The Project Management Institute further states that maturing these competencies allows organizations to have the ability to "minimize risks, control costs, and increase value."

As such, there a direct line can be drawn from campaigns (run as a project, with timelines) to organizational goals and objectives. This makes the need to track budgetary concerns central to the success of a campaign.

- Budget

Part of the project management discussion includes budgeting. "Budgeting is about more than money. It deals with all the needed resources to implement a tactic" (Smith 316). He goes on to further state that public relations and marketing should consider the following five categories to be budgeted for: personnel, material, media costs, equipment and facilities, and administrative costs (316).

The Project Management Institute reports that "9.9% of every dollar is wasted due to poor project performance." Given a campaign budget of $1,500, spread across five campaigns in a given year, this is a total campaign budget of $7,500. If 9.9% of project money is wasted due to poor project performance, then that amounts to $742.50 wasted each year in poor project performance, nearly half the cost of a single campaign.

Being able to draw a direct line from campaign performance to project performance, to organizational goals is important, because it highlights the need for effective project management. This need for effective project management ties directly back to organizational goals and needs, as campaigns, such as is being discussed, relate directly to an organization's financial bottom line.

In order for a campaign to be considered a success, the budget must be evaluated against the financial gain from the campaign itself. This information is gathered in the communication plan, and according to Ogden and Wilson "are just as much a part of your strategic and creative planning as are the other elements of your plan" (176).

- Evaluation

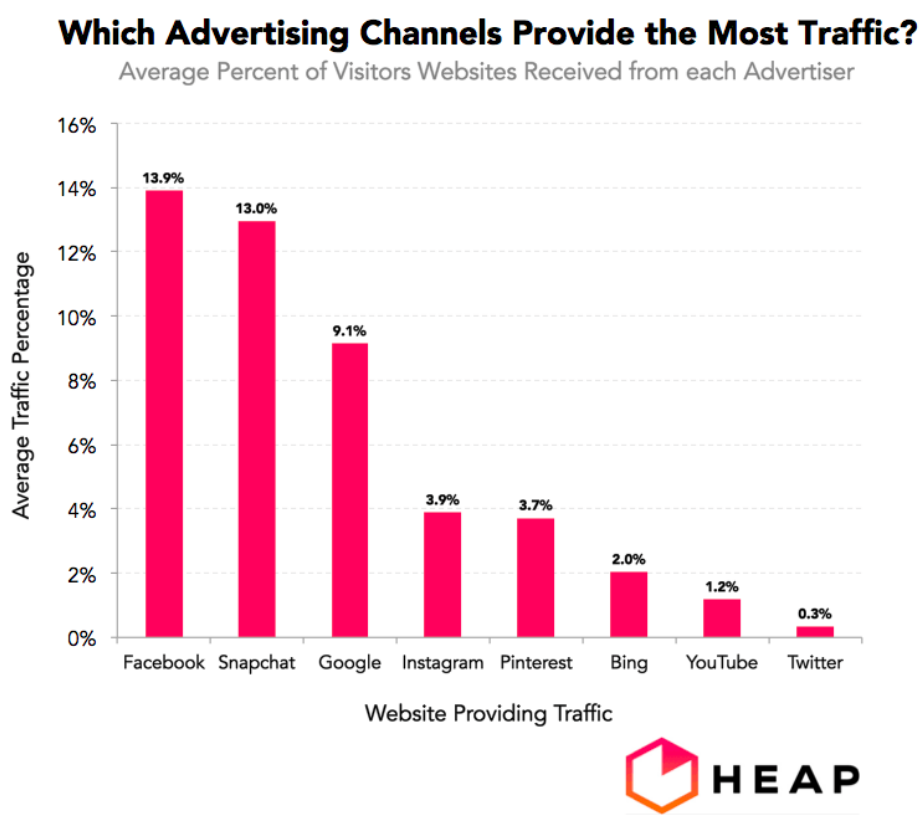
Each of the aspects for a formal communication plan help to ensure organizational alignment with goals. Going through the process of building a formal communication plan helps to ensure that the strategic communications are aligned with organizational strategies.

Wilson and Ogden note that evaluation of program effectiveness measures whether tactics succeed "in delivering the right motivational messages to the right publics and caused them to act" (195). This is measured in a variety of ways. In today's social media economy and market, evaluation is often based on electronic data gathered during the campaign.

Pamela Vaughan lists social media ROI metrics. They include the following:

- Reach: How far your message spreads (Vaughn). This can be measured in likes, shares, and views over social media. It is difficult to measure how well a printed flyer performs, but QR codes can be included into flyers, with the traffic generated by the QR code measured.

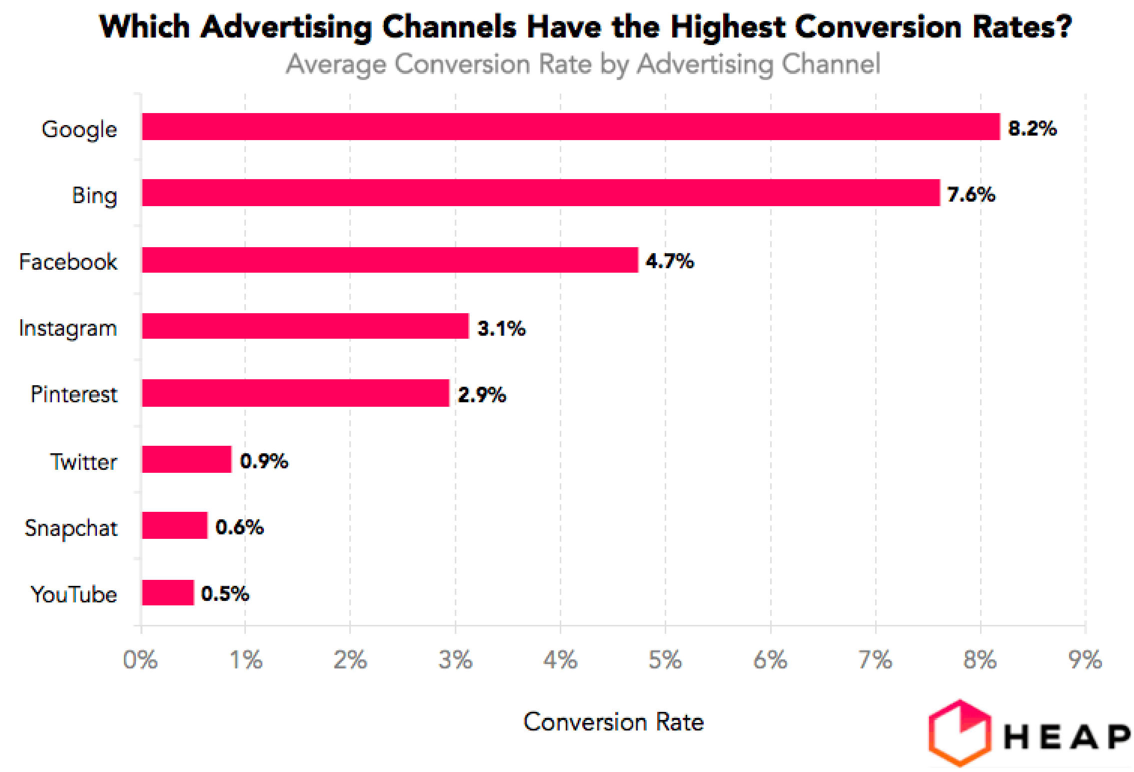
- Traffic: Does the reach generate traffic to the product or service (Vaughn)? This can be measured by examining website analytics. Heap Analytics lists Advertising Channels that provide the most traffic. Facebook leads the list for providing traffic to websites at 13.9%. The breakdown for platforms that drive website traffic is as follows:



- Conversion of traffic to leads: How much traffic if converted to leads (Vaughn)? Leads are often sign-ups. This can be measured by gathering the number of sign ups for an event, or from an email list.

- Conversion of leads to customers: How many leads are becoming customers (Vaughn)? This can be measured by determining if potential customers gathered during a campaign become paying customers.
- Conversion rates of tactics: How well do tactics perform in conversion rates (Vaughn)? This is done by examining leads, traffic, and reach to the related tactics.

  Heap Analytics lists conversion rates for advertising channels.



Understanding these conversion rates helps to inform the criteria by which campaign effectiveness is measured.

"In addition to evaluating campaign results, you should look at the effectiveness of different parts of your plan, including how well strategies and tactics performed. You should also evaluate your own performance" (Wilson and Ogden 195). Performance measures extend past the quantifiable results driven by social media views, website analytics, and attendance. The ability to execute the plan as defined should also be evaluated. Creativity and communication can be evaluated in terms of how well the team performed.

Self-evaluation will lead to the improvement of the skills needed to execute an effective campaign. There may be a need for additional training. The organization itself may need to adapt to facilitate successful execution of campaigns and communication plans. Briscoe, Baccineli, and Chambless outline a project review process to facilitate not only successful project completion, but growth and improvement. The review process has an output of a final report that includes the following:

- Project Determination: Compliant or 'at risk'
- Executive summary: a one-page brief summarizing the findings
- Project Metrics: a report that compares the project's metrics to the PMO (Project Management Office) standards
- Findings: a summary of the issues found during the review process
- Recommendations: actions to be taken to correct findings

Having an internal project review process helps to facilitate the successful completion of future projects. A robust review process also helps to target areas which the organization needs to target for improvement and development. All data gathered should be retained and reviewed for future campaigns. Having this data is not only useful for the current campaign, but also future campaigns.

Campaign Plan Considerations

A quick overview of campaign plan considerations is included as a connection between the actual campaign that is run and organizational strategy. This overview provides context to the successful execution of an advertising campaign. While organizational strategy and a strong formal communication plan are essential, the campaign itself is the vehicle for communication to key publics.

Atkin and Rice explain that "public communication campaigns can be defined as purposive attempts to inform or influence behaviors in large audiences within a specified time period using an organized set of communication activities" (3). Campaigns are designed to be available for a fixed amount of time for a fixed and specified purpose. They must align with communication plans and organizational purpose to be considered effective.

When considering the market of higher education, it is important to note that colleges and universities compete for talented students much in the same way that businesses compete for talented workers (Lockwood and Hadd 1). Lockwood and Hadd continue to state that though education brands consistently rely on marketing and advertising campaigns, "an effective brand strategy can be maximized only if the brand carries a promise – and if every member of the academic community is committed to fulfilling that promise" (1). That is, even with an effective advertising campaign, there must be alignment of strategy through the organization.

"Advertising is never created in isolation" ("Manager's Guide to Competitive Marketing Strategies'). Advertising campaigns and promotions should exist as part of a larger mix. As communication plans are informed by organizational strategies, campaign plans are informed in large part by communication plans. *The Manager's Guide to Competitive Marketing Strategies* outlines steps involved in developing advertising campaigns. Without going into too much detail for each step, note how many of these steps coincide with the requirements of a communication plan.

1. Market analysis
2. Product research
3. Customer research
4. Set advertising objectives
5. Decide on level of appropriation
6. Formulate advertising strategy
7. Integrate advertising strategy with overall marketing strategy
8. Develop detailed advertising budget
9. Choose message content and mode of presentation
10. Analyze legal ramifications
11. Establish media plan
12. Review agency presentation
13. Production and traffic
14. Insert advertisements
15. Impact control
16. Review and revision

Much of the work outlined in the steps to creating an advertising campaign plan are associated with having a well-written communication plan, thus the need for a formal communication plan becomes more apparent. The main theme is that campaigns should align with overall strategy.

There are three factors that should come into play before a campaign can be successful. First, people should know the brand, and be aware of it. People tend to choose brands that they are already familiar with. When an unrecognized brand offers a product or service, individuals are less likely to choose it. Second, people must like the brand. Likability of the advertising extends to the brand, so organizations concentrate to creating campaigns that people will like. Third, the brand must fulfill a consumer need. When a brand fulfills a consumer need, individuals will be more interested in it, the brand offers a product or service that is relevant to their own lives (van den Putte 672).

When these factors are considered, the need for an overall strategy becomes even more apparent. According to van den Putte, when brand awareness and recall is already large, it can be difficult to increase awareness further (672). Thus, small brands can expect larger effects for awareness campaign efforts. In order to raise the likability of a brand, it must depend on the likeability of its messaging in order to transfer that likability back to the brand itself. When the campaign addresses consumer needs, the brand already carries a likability factor.

Apple stopped featuring computers in their advertising when Steve Jobs returned to Apple after being fired. Rather than making advertising about the computer and the brand, they instead made their advertising about their customers and tapped into their stories. Miller states they did this by (1) identifying what their customers wanted, (2) defining their customers' challenge, and (3) offering customers a tool they could use to express themselves. By casting the customer as the hero of their story, Apple was able to connect on a personal level with customers, a strategy still employed by Apple today in their campaigns (Miller 18). The continued employment of this strategy highlights alignment from organizational strategy through campaign.

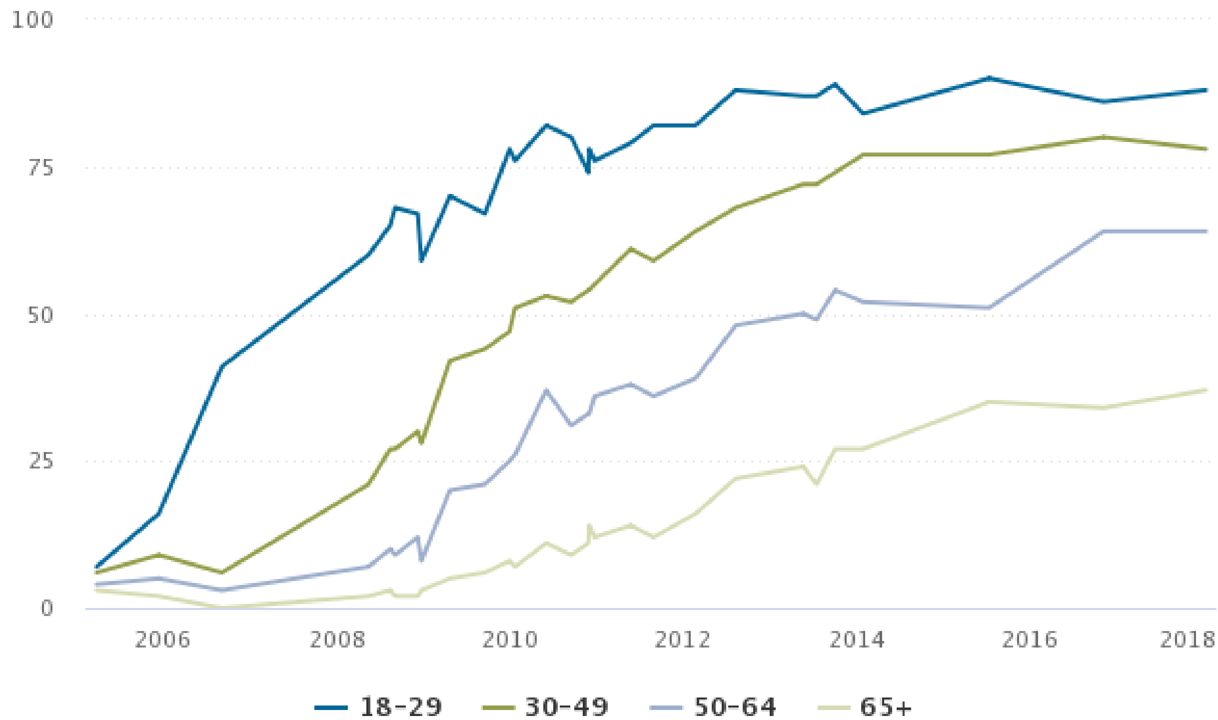
Miller's mention of Apple's advertising is an example of a brand addressing a core consumer need, and therefore creating a likability factor, a key for success noted by van den Putte. The key behind this, according to Miller, is understanding that the customer is the hero of their own story, not the organization (30). This strategy allows organizations to increase their likability factor. Regardless of the medium, the message of the campaign must reach the customer where they are and resonate with them in order to increase the likability factor of the organization.

A key to creating trust and likability is communicating with the correct key public. If a message is not communicated to an interested key public, the message is either (1) ignored, as the message does not hold any sense of importance to that public, or (2) disapproved or despised, as the message feels as though it doesn't have relevance and is therefore considered spam or unwanted messaging. Social media offers the ability to segment messaging based on demographics.

Social Media

Social media use has grown over the past 13 years. As of January 2018, 88% of 18-29 year olds report being on at least one social media site; 78% of 30-49 year olds, 64% of 50-64 year olds, and 37% of individuals aged 65+ (Pew Research Center). The following chart breaks down social media use growth over the past 13 years, broken up by age.

% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by age



Source: Surveys conducted 2005-2018.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

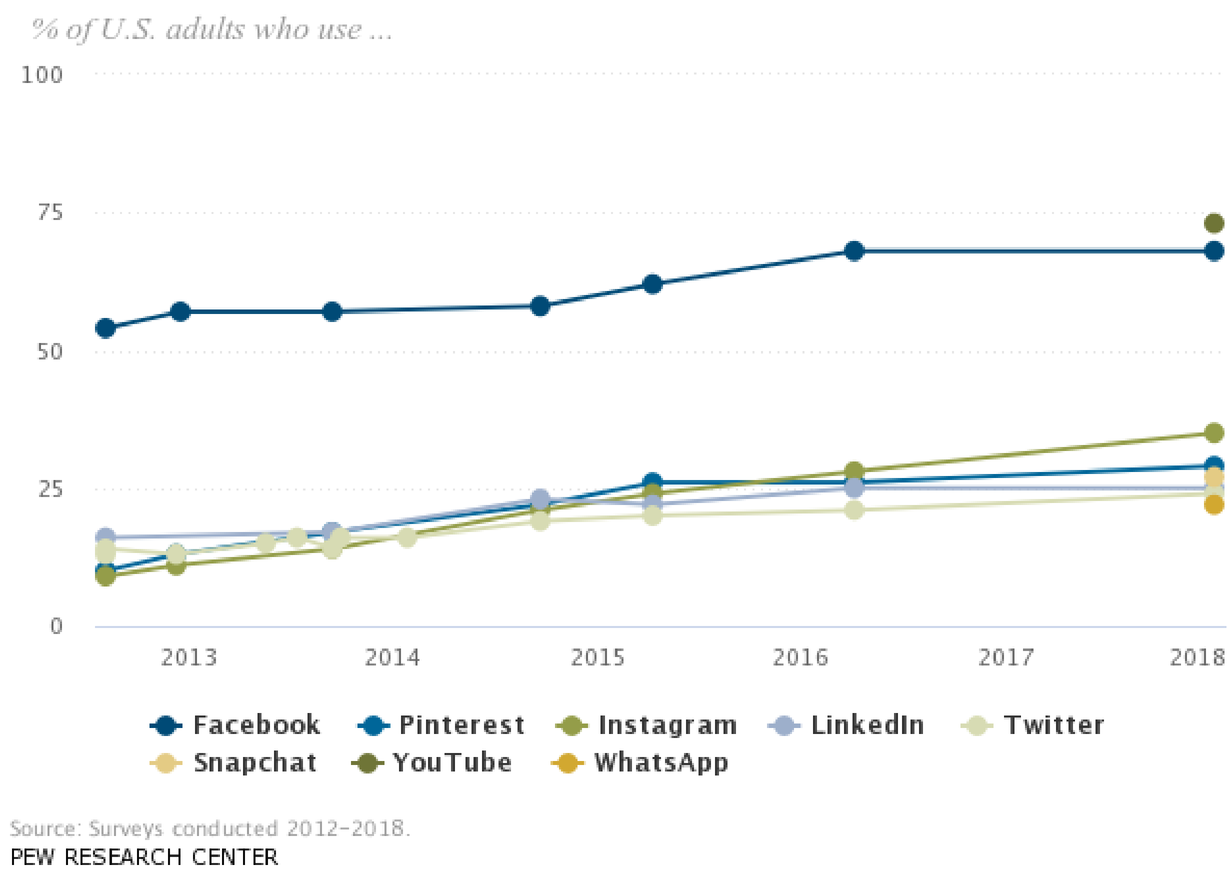
Social media use has certainly grown over time. The prevalence of social media not only highlights the availability of communication between individuals, but it also creates an opportunity for organizations to communicate with individuals. Even with the relative newness of the medium, the same tested principles of customer trust and brand likability are applicable.

The availability of data through various social media platforms allows for message segmentation; meaning that organizations can target their messages to those individuals who they will most-likely connect with. Facebook offers this service as a boosted post. "The Boost Post button allows you to quickly create a Facebook at using your post. This ad can appear in different places on Facebook, and you can show it to an audience of people you define" (Facebook). Facebook's targeted advertising efforts allow individuals and organizations to create

Facebook ads that appear on users' Facebook feeds. Facebook boosted posts offer data insights as well, giving organizations (and individuals) insight about how an ad performed.

By tailoring a message to a particular key public, and then segmenting them via social media demographics, campaigns have a better chance of performing well, attaining the goals set forth by the communication plan, and aligning with organizational strategies.

While Facebook is certainly not the only social media platform available, it is among the most broadly used platforms. Pew Research data from January 2018 reports social media usage as follows:



While YouTube ranks slightly higher than Facebook, the video medium and lack of demographic targeting that Facebook offers make Facebook a more widely targetable medium. It is important for organizations to continue to monitor this data though, as social media trends may change. It is equally important to understand that social media platforms change and advance. Even while YouTube may not offer the level of demographic targeting that Facebook does today, that does not guarantee that YouTube won't offer that same functionality in the future.

Measuring Success

Measuring the success of a campaign is critical. Not only is the campaign itself reviewed for effectiveness regarding enrollments and data collection, but strategies, tactics, and project performance are also measured. Smith notes that there are twelve reminders about evaluative research. They are as follows:

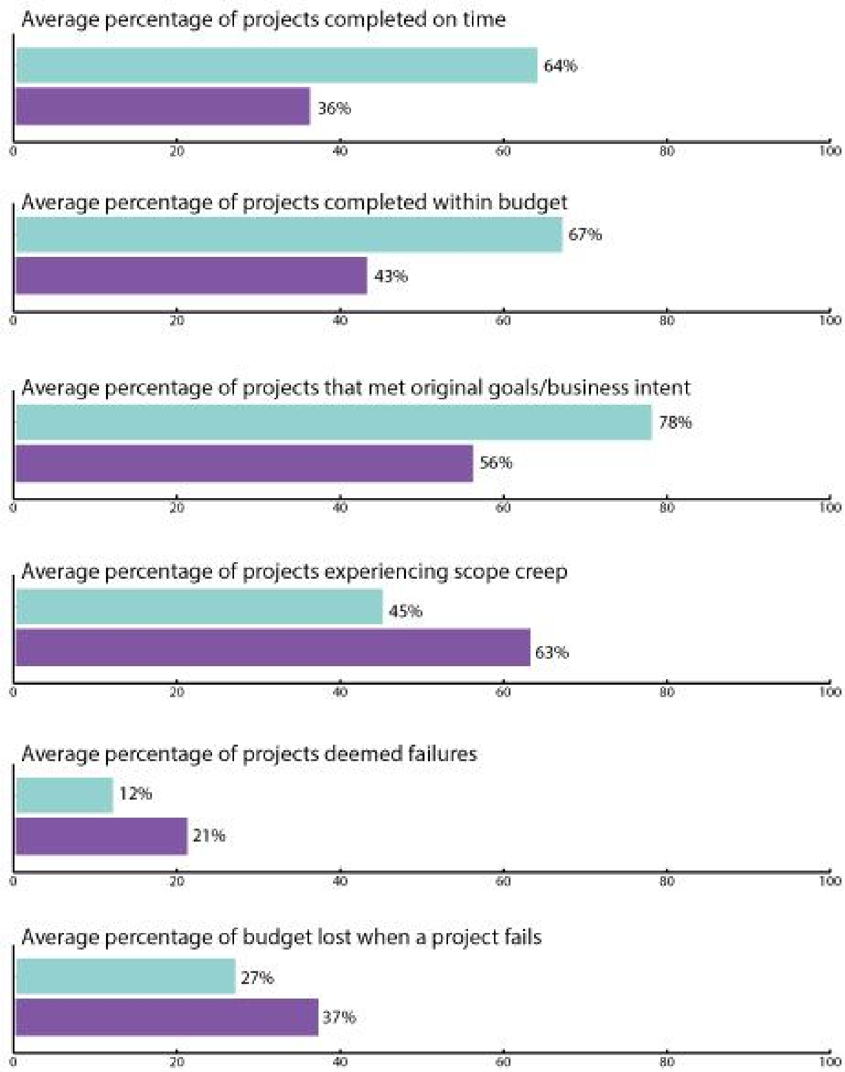
1. "Don't wait for the programs completion before you evaluate" (Smith 334). Implementation reports and progress reports can inform changes during the campaign. Changes may be made during the running of the campaign in order to make the campaign more effective.
2. "Guesses aren't good enough. Evaluation must rely on facts, not estimates" (334).
3. "Friends may be telling you what they think you want to hear" (334). Look beyond those that will speak kindly of your organization regardless of reality.
4. "Employees have a stake in the program's success" (334). Employees may only see and report what reflects positively on themselves.

5. “Samples must reflect the population” (334). Research should draw on a sample that represents the publics addressed (334).
6. “Hard work and cost aren’t measures of effectiveness” (334). Activity does not equate to achievement. While a campaign may have used many resources, that does not indicate success.
7. “Creativity is not a gauge for effectiveness” (334). A successful campaign isn’t a neat idea; there must be results.
8. “Dissemination doesn’t equal communication” (334). Distribution of an idea does not equate to communication.
9. “Knowledge doesn’t always lead to acceptance” (334). While knowledge is an important aspect of support, it does not guarantee it.
10. “Behavior is the ultimate measure” (334). Awareness and acceptance objectives are certainly worth considering, but campaign effectiveness is measured in action taken (334).
11. “Evaluation doesn’t have to be expensive or time-consuming” (334). Proper evaluation requires creativity, insight, and hard work, but not *always* a lot of resources.
12. “Evaluative research enables action” (334). Through research, past and current campaigns can be evaluated, and future campaigns can be considered.

It is through these reminders, with consideration of campaign and communication plan essentials, that campaign effectiveness and success can be determined. Within the context of Webster University’s academic program information sessions, these 12 points must be well considered in order to gain an understanding of the process behind running these campaigns. As Webster University is relatively new to this process (having only completed the campaigns in the included case studies), it will be important to consider them when evaluating the effectiveness of these campaigns.

These twelve points inform the framework from which the campaigns in the following case studies can be effectively evaluated. They also highlight the need for a project management approach to running campaigns.

The Project Management Institute further reports that organizations that include project management into their processes report a higher rate of success. The following table illustrates this effect:



As can be seen, when organizations include project management as a strategic part of their projects, not only do the success rates increase, but organizations' strategic goals are better met. The percentage of projects completed on time is increased by 28%, projects completed within budget increases by 24%, and projects that meet original goals and business intent increases by 22% (Project Management Institute). Each of these three indicators are directly applicable to communication plans and campaigns.

By taking into account the twelve points listed above, the data reported by the Project Management Institute, background information regarding campaigns and communication plans, and Pamela Vaughn's metrics for ROI on social media, the following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaigns in the case studies.

Each question will be graded on a scale of 1-4, with notes attached to each score. The rubric is as follows:

Table 1

Grading Rubric for Campaign Effectiveness

	3. Performance Exceeded expectations	**2. Performed as expected.**	**1. Limited Data, limited performance.**	**0. No Data, poor performance**
Implementation: Was the campaign evaluated upon implementation? What were the results?	Implementation was well documented and communicated to the team.	Implementation was considered, some communication, some reporting done.	Minimal consideration was given to implementation, minimal results.	No implementation reporting.
Progress: Was the campaign evaluated during the campaign? What were the results?	Progress reporting was well documented, communicated to entire team.	Progress reporting done, individuals minimally informed.	Minimal progress reporting.	No progress reporting.

Data: Who is responsible for reporting data, is it accurate?	Specific person with minimal stake identified for reporting data.	General group with minimal stake is identified and responsible for reporting data.	Employees with a stake in data are responsible for reporting data.	No direct contact for data reporting.
Resources: What resources were used, who is responsible for what? Was each team effective?	Strong resource planning, resulting in engaged teams communicating.	Adequate resource planning, resulting in work done on time.	Minimal resource planning, resulting in delayed work.	No resource planning, resulting in confusion, no data.
Timeliness: Were all phases completed on time?	All phases completed on time.	Most phases completed on time.	Few phases completed on time.	No phases completed on time, no data.
Reach: How many people did the campaign reach?	More than 30,000 people reached.	Between 10,000 – 30,000 people reached.	Less than 10,000 people reached.	No people reached during campaign, no data.
Traffic: How much traffic was generated?	High amounts of traffic generated.	Moderate traffic generated.	Minimal traffic generated.	No traffic generated, no data.
Leads: How much traffic led to leads (RSVP requests for information sessions)?	More than 60 RSVPs generated.	Between 31-60 RSVPs generated.	Between 0-30 RSVPs generated	No RSVPs generated, no data.
Conversion: How many leads	Above 4.7%	Between 3% - 4.7%.	Between 0.01% - 2.99%.	No conversion rates, no data.

signed up for the program?				
Budget: Was campaign completed within budget?	Below budget.	At budget.	Minimally over budget.	Significantly over budget, no data.
Goals: Did campaign meet intended goals?	Exceeded intended goals.	Met intended goals.	Met some goals.	Did not meet intended goals, no data.
Success: Was the campaign considered a success?	Campaign considered a stellar success.	Campaign considered successful.	Campaign considered marginal success.	Campaign considered a failure.

Using the above rubric, the following campaigns will be evaluated. Scoring will be as follows, with "A" representing the highest possible score range, and "D" representing the lowest possible score range.

Table 2

Grading Rubric Point Breakdown

Points	**Score**

0-9	D
10-18	C
19-27	B
28-36	A

Chapter 3: A Tale of Two Campaigns

Webster University offers free live events that explain aspects of various academic programs, their associated job markets, and relevant skills for employment. These webinars are an effort to drive enrollment towards academic programs and help potential students find programs and gain skills that will prepare them for employment in their chosen field. These webinars range in subject matter from more general subjects such as “Articulating Transferable Skills for Career Changers and Shifters” to niche subject matter associated with specific academic programs such as Cybersecurity (Webster University).

For purposes of this research, two campaigns for webinars intended for their distinct academic programs will be compared. As webinars held by Webster University vary in nature, two webinars that are related to academic programs will be compared. This will help to ensure that common goals are clear, and the evaluation criteria can be applied across them.

What follows is two case studies, both campaigns for academic program webinars. The first is the “Legal Huddle” webinar, intended to raise awareness of Webster University’s Paralegal program. The second case study is the “Cybersecurity” webinar, intended to raise awareness of Webster University’s Cybersecurity programs.

Chapter 4: Legal Huddle Webinar Case Study

On Thursday, September 27, 2018 Webster University hosted a Legal Huddle webinar. The intention of this particular webinar was to direct students towards Webster University's Paralegal academic programs and was directed towards potential students who were interested in working as a paralegal but were unsure where to start (Webster University).

Background

Paralegal professionals "aid attorneys in nearly every facet of the legal profession." They aid lawyers by drafting reports and motions. They may also specialize in certain aspects of law, such as criminal, immigration, or family. They are also known as legal assistants (U.S. News).

The median salary for a paralegal is $49,500, listing the profession as the seventh best in social services jobs (U.S. News). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the number of jobs in 2016 was 285,600, with a 15% growth expected between 2016-2026.

Mention of U.S. News reports of profession salary and United States Bureau of Labor Statistics are mentioned in an effort to highlight the feasibility of Webster University's academic program and intended webinar regarding this program.

There are no set requirements for working as a paralegal professional, although most individuals do carry a certificate or degree in paralegal studies, which introduces individuals to the field and gives students an education that prepares them for employment (U.S. News).

Webster University offers a Graduate Certificate in Paralegal Studies. This program is available online, at their St. Louis home campus, and at their Gateway campus (Webster University). "The certificate program in paralegal studies is designed to provide the theoretical and practical education needed by those who work or desire to work as paralegals (legal assistants)"(Webster University).

Much of the campaign to highlight Webster University's Paralegal program was informal and unplanned. As such, there was not a formal communication plan involved in this campaign. An employee of Webster University had attended another institution's paralegal webinar out of interest to see how it was run and attended. This employee found it to be well attended, but not run as well as this employee through Webster University could have run it based on previous webinars and courses that Webster University has run via WebEx in the past (Webster University). It was decided that a webinar should be run by Webster University to raise awareness for the Paralegal program.

Methods

As stated, there was not an official communication plan designed for this campaign. As such, the methods described below will reflect the organization and efforts by Webster University. Webster University's Global Marketing and Communications department was contacted to run a campaign for this webinar (Webster University). The campaign consisted of the following:

- A post to Webster University's Events portal with informational content posted in the description (Webster University).
- A Facebook event post boosted on Webster University Online Learning Center's Facebook page (Webster University).

- A series of two posts by Webster University's Career Planning and Development Center (Webster University).
- A flyer designed by Webster University's Global Marketing and Communications department for whoever wanted to print it (Webster University).
- A graphic created by Webster University's Career Planning and Development Center to be used for the Facebook postings (Webster University).

Additionally, a single Facebook post was boosted with a budget of $75.00 on Webster University Online Learning Center's Facebook account. It was targeted to both men and women, ages 18-65+. and was posted on September 9th, 18 days before the Paralegal Studies webinar was to take place (Webster University).

Case Study Results

The Facebook campaign that was run from Webster University Online Learning Center's Facebook account resulted in the following data:

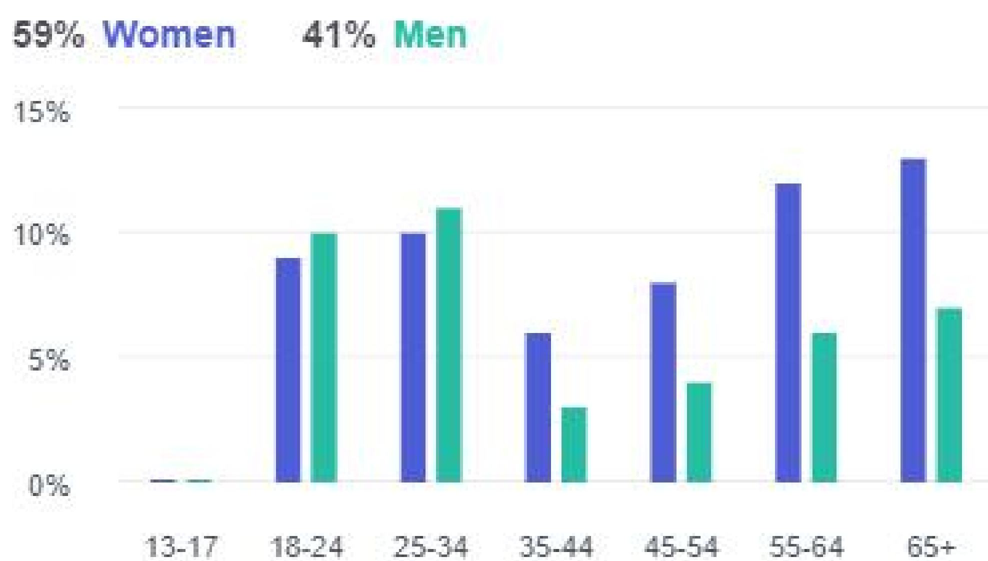
Table 3

Webster University Online Learning Center – Legal Huddle Facebook Ad Boost

Reach	**Clicks**	**Likes**	**Comments**	**Shares**
4,468	43	1	1	2

Source: Webster University Online Learning Center. “Legal Huddle with Professor Robin Jefferson Higgins.” www.facebook.com/events/535814126871543/.

Demographically, the results showed that a majority of the individuals who the Facebook ad reached were women (59% women, 41% men), with the majority of ages having seen the ad being split between ages 55-64 and over 65 years old, with the second highest rate being nearly split between 18-24 and 25-34 years old (Webster University Online). The data provided does not yield further insights, as it was limited in scope.



Source: Webster University Online Learning Center. “Legal Huddle with Professor Robin Jefferson Higgins.” www.facebook.com/events/535814126871543/.

The advertising resulted in 7 RSVPs for the event, with one individual in attendance. (Webster University).

Case Study Evaluation

This campaign did not include a formal communication plan. As such, much of the information needed to effectively evaluate the campaign is missing. Nonetheless, the campaign should be evaluated based on the designated rubric.

Table 4

Legal Huddle Rubric Grading

Implementation	0
Progress	0
Data	0
Resources	2
Timeliness	2
Reach	1
Traffic	0
Leads	0
Conversion	0
Budget	0
Goals	0

Success	1
Total	**6**
Grade	**D**

Implementation: 0 points

There was little documented in the form of implementation planning. It was decided that Webster University would promote their Paralegal Studies program through an online information session, but little was planned or communicated.

Progress: 0 points

There was no documentation about the progress of this campaign. After the campaign was run, information was shared.

Data: 0 points

There was no direct contact appointed for data collection and reporting. Data was gathered by tracking down the owner of the Facebook page and having them report what was reported by Facebook.

Resources: 2 points

In this case, the Global Marketing and Communications team at Webster University handled the design of the assets and promoted through their default channels. Even if the result was low conversions and attendance, the resource planning was adequate for the job that needed to be completed.

Timeliness: 2 points

Timeliness was again handled well by Global Marketing and Communications. All assets were designed within a reasonable timeline to have the campaign run.

Reach: 1 point

As the post was boosted, the reach for the boosted post reached what would be considered a reasonable number of people for a single boosted post. Overall, the campaign did not reach many individuals.

Traffic: 0 points

There was no traffic data gathered for this campaign, as the links were directed to a page that did not report traffic.

Leads: 0 points

As there was no traffic data tracked, conversion rates were also not tracked. Regardless of missing traffic data, there were only seven RSVPs for this event.

Conversion: 0 points

There is no available data for the number of enrollments for the Paralegal Studies program as a result of this information session.

Budget: 0 points

No budgetary concerns were brought forward in the beginning, so there was no budget for this particular campaign. This resulted in no data.

Goals: 0 points

As there were no goals set in a communication plan, no data was collected.

Success: 1 point

This particular campaign was minimally successful. As it did potentially raise minimal awareness and did result in at least some RSVPs (although a minimal amount), there was at least some success in the results. The management of the project materials was managed well by Global Marketing and Communications. This campaign cannot be considered a complete failure, though it is minimally successful.

Case Study Evaluation Summary

As this campaign was run without the presence of a formal communication plan, much of the information needed to evaluate the effectiveness of a campaign were missing. The data from this campaign highlights the need for a communication plan, as attendance and reach were both minimal. Areas where this campaign scored well were in isolation, as the rest of the campaign was not handled with a communication plan, resulting in a lower overall rating and grade.

Chapter 5: Cybersecurity Programs Webinar Case Study

On November 27 and 28, 2018, Webster University hosted two webinars to discuss their Graduate programs related to Cybersecurity.

Background

Those who work in the field of Cybersecurity have job titles related to the title of Information Security Analyst. “Information security analysists are the gatekeepers or security guards of information systems… These professionals plan and execute security measures to shield an organization’s computer systems and networks from infiltration and cyberattacks” (U.S. News).

U.S. News reports the median salary of an Information Security Analyst to be $92,000, listing the job as number two in best technology jobs, number 6 in best STEM jobs, and number 32 in the 100 best jobs. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics notes that there were 100,000 jobs available in this field in 2016, and that the market is expected to grow by 28% between 2016-2026.

Again, U.S. News data and United Stated Bureau of Labor Statistics information is mentioned in an effort to highlight the feasibility of Webster University’s academic programs in this field.

Individuals who work as Information Security Analysts typically have a bachelor’s degree in a computer related program such as computer science or programming. Additionally, individuals working in this field may have certifications that reflect their education and expertise (U.S. News).

Webster University offers two programs intended for Cybersecurity professionals; a Cybersecurity – Threat Detection Graduate Certificate and a Master of Science in Cybersecurity (Webster University). The graduate certificate titled “Cybersecurity – Threat Detection” is intended to focus “on the knowledge and tools necessary to address the increasing demand on corporate and governmental organizations to improve the security of their ‘cyber content’” (Webster University). Graduate Certificates “often teach specific skills or hone topics within larger fields – as opposed to degrees, which are more broadly focused” (U.S. News).

Webster University’s Graduate degree program, a Master’s in Science in Cybersecurity, prepares students for employment in “public and private sectors overseeing, operating, or protecting critical computer systems, information, networks, infrastructures and communications networks.” Additionally, the Master’s degree program offers learning “related to domestic and international legal systems, private and public policies, and ethics, as they apply cybersecurity to information protection, terrorism, fraud, theft, intelligence/counterintelligence, digital forensics, pre-emptive and strategic force operation application situations” (Webster University). Thus, the Master’s degree is an expanded application of what is learned in the “Cybersecurity – Threat Detection” curriculum.

The campaign for this particular webinar highlighting the Cybersecurity academic programs was planned using a formal communications plan template. This communications plan informed every step of the campaign for this webinar.

Cybersecurity Webinar Formal Communication Plan

Following is the formal communication plan for the Cybersecurity Webinar. Information was gathered from various sources within Webster University.

Situation Analysis/Background:

The following is a formal communication plan, designed and developed for a campaign for a web-based seminar about the Cybersecurity programs at Webster University. Webster University offers both a Cybersecurity – Threat Detection Graduate Certificate as well as a Master of Science in Cybersecurity (Webster University).

As of October 2018, Webster University offers 35 online Master's Degrees, eight online Bachelor's Degrees, and 24 online certificates (Webster University). Webster University also operates in 19 states within the United States including approximately 35 military installation locations and 24 metro locations, and within seven countries other than the United States (Webster University).

In addition, Webster serves approximately 5,500 graduate students and 1,200 undergraduate students in online programs (Webster University).

SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT analysis evaluates an organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis analyzes both the external and internal environments in which an organization operates. "Strengths and weaknesses refer to the positive and negative aspects of the organization's internal capabilities and resources, while opportunities and threats refer to external influences and factors that may affect the organization" (Evans, Wright 10). The external environment includes "economic, political, and competitive forces that shape the future" (Mathis, Jackson, Valentine, Meglich). Within the Human Resources perspective, the internal environment includes "the quality and quantity of talent, the organization culture, and the talent pipeline and leadership bench strength" (Mathis, et al). Additionally, internal factors for this particular case include the processes and availability of the academic programs to be offered.

A SWOT analysis for Webster University's offering of an online Cybersecurity program is as follows. Listed first is a graphical summary in a traditional graphic layout:

Table 5

SWOT Analysis Grid

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Worldwide network Strong midwest ranking 40 years military education experience Robust communication infrastructure Experience using WebEx	Lack of communciation plans Unsuccessful previous campaigns
Opportunities	**Threats**
Strong Cybersecurity job market Growing interest in online education	Other institutions offering similar program More higher-ed institutions going online

Following is a detailed SWOT analysis, with each item listed from each category discussed in further detail.

Strengths

"Founded in 1915, Webster is a private non-profit university with students studying at campus locations in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa and in a robust learning environment online" (Webster University). In September 2018, Webster University stated "Overall, Webster University retained its position at 23rd place in the 'Regional University – Midwest' category, which includes 165 institutions. Among Missouri institutions, Webster is one of only three in the top 25, and one of only two private, nonprofit institutions" (Webster University). Webster University is well-placed in both historical and contemporary contexts to offer a quality education.

Webster University has been delivering educational programs to the United States Military for over 40 Years (Webster University). Webster University received regional "Best for Veterans" and "Best Value School" awards from U.S. News & World Report (Webster University). As such, Webster University has a deep understanding of the needs of military students in addition to the needs of the civilian workforce.

Regarding the ability to communicate with potential (and current) students, Webster University has a robust communication infrastructure. Each of the approximately 60 military and metro locations spread across 19 states and eleven international sites spread across seven countries operates their own social media account. Additionally, Webster University's Online division has their own blog and social media accounts that span Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Webster University). This communication infrastructure allows for broad distribution of targeted social media messages.

The information from the web-based seminar that will be run in a well-tested and well-used delivery system, WebEx. Webster University utilizes WebEx to run online courses and is able to utilize the same platform to deliver web-based seminars. Similar seminars have been run in the past, so Webster University has experience running and delivering these online communication experiences.

Weaknesses

One particular weakness of Webster University has been that historically campaigns have been run without a clear communication plan. The old adage of "If you build it, they will come" (Field of Dreams) tends to take hold in campaign plans. As such, some campaigns have not been as successful as they perhaps could have been. Previous attempts at creating awareness and interest campaigns have resulted in little interest.

Opportunities

The job market for those who graduate with Cybersecurity credentials is positive. The United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics lists data for the job market for Information Security Analysts. In 2017, the median pay was $95,510 per year, with a typical entry-level education being a Bachelor's degree, with the job outlook being 28% positive change in employment, being much faster than average. "Demand for information security analysts is expected to be very high. Cyberattacks have grown in frequency, and analysts will be needed to come up with innovative solutions to prevent hackers from stealing critical information or creating problems for computer networks" (United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Interest in online education has grown over time. Between 2015 and 2016, enrollments at public nonprofit institutions such as Webster University have grown by 7.1% overall (Friedman). This indicates a growing interest in gaining a higher-education credential online, which makes programs such as Webster University's online Cybersecurity programs attractive.

Threats

As the job market around Cybersecurity has been growing, and is expected to grow, many other education institutions are offering this same program. As an example, bestcolleges.com lists online Cybersecurity programs for 25 universities around the United States, and none of the programs listed belong to Webster University (bestcolleges.com). A threat to offering this program online is other educational institutions offering this same program.

The same 7.1% growth in enrollments at public nonprofit institutions that indicates an opportunity for growth for Webster University also indicates a possible threat, as there are a higher number of higher-ed institutions offering their programs online. Beyond consideration of only online Cybersecurity programs, competition for online education overall has grown. Public education institutions had a 7.3% growth between 2015 and 2016. For-profit institutions have not had this same growth, as enrollment at for-profit institutions has dropped by 4.5% (Friedman).

Goal(s):

The Cybersecurity seminar will serve several purposes. First, it will raise awareness of both the Master of Science in Cybersecurity and Cybersecurity – Threat Detection Graduate Certificate programs at Webster University within the school of Business and Technology. Second, the seminar will help students to understand the climate and expectations of the Cybersecurity job market. The seminar will help students to understand how what they will learn in these programs will prepare them for employment in the Cybersecurity job market.

Key Publics

Key publics are defined as “the various groups of people who interact with your organization on the issue at hand” (Smith). Key publics will be defined within the context of this campaign.

Primary Publics

Primary publics are those who the campaign is directly intentioned for. Primary publics for this campaign will include the following.

- Professionals who are currently working and switching careers
- Current Cybersecurity professionals that are looking for credentials in order to gain a promotion.
- Prospective students who are looking for credentials in order to gain employment.

- Military students who have some type of prior military training, but need to round out their education and gain a credential to help them gain employment in the civilian workforce.

Secondary Publics

Secondary publics are those who the campaign is not directly intentioned for, but that may gain useful information from the running of this campaign. Secondary publics for this campaign will consist of the following:

- Potential employers for individuals with Cybersecurity credentials. These employers will have information about quality online programs that will graduate students with the necessary training needed to be successful professionals.
- College ranking and review websites. As these sites review and rank programs, they will become aware of Webster University's online Cybersecurity programs, and they may be listed on their websites, helping Webster University gain favorable rankings, and greater exposure.

Research

Proper research has already been carried out in regard to the feasibility of the Cybersecurity programs. As stated in the Opportunities section of the SWOT analysis above, the Cybersecurity job field is growing, so the value of offering of these academic programs is already established. Research mentioned above in the Opportunities section of the SWOT analysis regarding online programs overall has also revealed behaviors that indicate that students are willing and able to attend online courses.

To assess which geographic locations should be targeted through social media for this campaign, a simple qualitative assessment was done regarding enrollment at each of the military locations around the United States. This enrollment data informed where the highest concentration of students resides and would therefore give Webster University the best results in advertising efforts.

Objectives

Objectives are “statements of specific results that will lead to the achievement of the goal. They must be specific, written, measurable, attainable, time-bound, cost-conscious, efficient and mission driven” (Wilson & Ogden).

- Run a three-week campaign for a webinar in November in order to positively affect enrollment for Spring 2019 classes.
- Reach 10,000 potential students through advertising in various formats for each region.
- 50 RSVPs for online webinar.
- 25 attendees
- 2 enrollments into one of the Webster University Cybersecurity academic programs.

Strategies

- While information conveyed to students should be informational in nature, it should also be aspirational, and inspire them to want to sign up for the webinar.
- The aspirational theme should continue through to the content of the webinar itself. There will certainly need to be informational content, but aspirational and inspirational content should also be used.
- List the details and facilitate a simple signup on a webpage on Webster University's website.
- Use social media to spread awareness of the webinar as part of the campaign.
- Incentivize attendees to enroll.
- Utilize email to reach out to potential attendees who we have contact information for.

Tactics

- A social media post that is aspirational as well as informational in nature should be posted to Facebook accounts. Information about the webinar with a link to a page with further information and signup details should be posted to the Facebook social media accounts for the following Webster University locations that each offer the either online, hybrid, or in-person Cybersecurity program:
    - Florida
        - Melbourne Metro
    - Online
        - Webster University Online
    - Colorado

        - Colorado Springs Metro
        - Peterson Air Force Base
    - Illinois
        - Scott Air Force Base
    - Missouri
        - Webster Groves main campus
        - Webster University Downtown campus
    - Kansas
        - Kansas City Metro
    - California
        - Irvine Metro

- Information about the webinar, programs, with a link to a page with further information and signup details should also be posted to Webster University Online's blog, as well as the Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts that belong to Webster University Online.
- Posts for each of the locations' Facebook accounts should be boosted.
- Initial posts should all be run for at least 14 days before another post about the same information session is posted. Another post should be made at about seven days out from the event (November 20, 2018), stating that it's not too late to register. This is a total of at least 21 days of social media posts preceding the webinar.
- Each social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn) will each require their own image, as each platform has their own requirements for images that can be posted.

- Graphical and text content for a flyer that will be distributed to sites for display in their local communities.
- Facebook promotion should include a demographic with the following features:
    - Men and women
    - Ages 18-65+
    - Interests and Industries should be left blank for this campaign, as Webster University should be targeting not only those with targeted interests in Information Technology, Security, and related fields, but also those who are looking to change fields and may not appear in Facebook's advertising targeting efforts.
- Waive any application fees for enrolling at Webster University for attendees.
- Enrollment will be made available on a webpage on Webster University Online's website. Enrollment should be a simple form.

Timeline

This campaign should begin by having social media posts placed during the week of November 5, 2018. During this week, posts should be made to each of Webster University Online's social media accounts (including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram). Information about the information session should also be listed on Webster University Online's blog. Additionally, an email should be sent to contacts that are tracked in Webster University Online's email service, Constant Contact. In addition, Facebook posts should be made to each of the locations who are involved with this campaign and boosted for the specified budget.

Budget

A modest budget has been established for this campaign. Eight of the locations that will be posting to Facebook will each of a $75 budget. The $75 budget should be used as follows:

- $75.00 Facebook boost for Webster University Online
- For sites that intend on printing flyers for local distribution: $50 for Facebook post boost, $25 for flyer printing and distribution.
- For sites that do not intend on printing flyers for local distribution: $75 for Facebook post boost.
- Total budget of $675.00

Evaluation Plan

In order to gauge the effectiveness of this campaign, an evaluation plan should be put into place. Having this plan at the outset helps to ensure that metrics are established, and the success of this campaign can be assessed.

- Information gathered from Facebook insights will be gathered from each participating location's Facebook post. This will return the number of views, funneled down to the number of engagements with the post. Engagements may be in the form of a post "like", a "share", a "comment" or a click.
- Analytics on the page that holds details and the signup link will be gathered, as Google Analytics are currently in use for Webster University's website. This will return the

number of individuals who have visited the page with the information regarding the webinar.

- The page that is linked to will contain a form that will serve as an individual's RSVP for the webinar. The number of RSVPs will be tracked.
- The number of attendees at the event will be tracked. This will be the number of individuals who log into the webinar at some point during the event.
- The number of enrollments into Webster University's Cybersecurity academic programs will be tracked.

Case Study Results

The results below for the Cybersecurity webinar campaign reflect the efforts of several different teams and individuals than were involved in the Legal Huddle webinar. This particular campaign involved a design team from the Online Learning Center, the Operations Manager from the Online Learning Center, and the Manager of Admissions from the Online Learning Center (Webster University). This particular campaign did not include the Global Marketing and Communications group.

Due to the far-reaching nature of Facebook as a social media platform, and the availability of it from an organizational perspective, it was chosen as the social media platform from which social advertising would take place. Not every location that was identified in the original communication plan participated in the social media push, while there was one additional location that did participate. Not all locations reported data. Webster University's Downtown location did not report data. Additionally, Peterson Air Force Base did not run the campaign. The data that follows is representative of the locations that reported data regarding the social media campaign.

Table 6

Webster University Online Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
14,263	35	0	0	0

Webster University Online Learning Center's Facebook post was created on 11/9/2018 and was boosted for a total of $75.00. Locations targeted included Illinois (35.6%), Missouri (30.1%), Wisconsin (18.3%), and Iowa (16.0%). No other social media postings were reported.

Table 7

Colorado Springs Metro Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
472	4	0	0	0

Webster University's Colorado Springs location posted their Facebook update on 11/13/2018. The boost budget was not made available, though the assumption was that it was for $75.00. With a lower reach, it can be assumed that the entire budget was not used, though it's not possible to say for certain, based on the data made available.

Table 8

Scott Air Force Base Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
112	30	0	0	0

Scott Air Force Base's total was low as well. The post was only made on 11/26/2018, one day before the webinar. There was no boosting information made available for reporting.

Table 9

Kansas City Metro Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
5,734	35	0	0	0

Kansas City Metro's Facebook post was made on 11/13/2018. The reach total from this location marks the difference between the lower totals and the upper totals. The next highest total below Kansas City is Colorado Springs Metro, with a reach of 472. This location also reported that locations targeted included Missouri (60.9%) and Kansas (39.1%).

Table 10

Irvine Metro Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares

5,838	46	1	0	0

Irvine Metro made their post on 11/13/2018. The post was boosted for a total of $75.00. The reach of this post resides in the upper grouping of total reach.

Table 11

National Capital Region Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
7,043	58	0	0	1

The National Capital Region's Facebook post was made on 11/13/2018. Data from this location indicates that the regions targeted were the District of Columbia (41.5%), Maryland (32.2%) and Virginia (26.3%). The total budget was $75.00.

Table 12

Melbourne Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
24	14	0	0	0

Melbourne's reach was much lower than the other reports. This was a result of the post not being boosted in Facebook. Due to the lower number of people reached, Facebook did not report any additional information about the post. The post was made on 11/14/18, so only one day after Colorado Springs, but with far less reach due to the lack of post boosting.

Table 13

Total Facebook – Cybersecurity Campaign

Reach	Clicks	Likes	Comments	Shares
33,486	222	1	0	1

Overall, the Facebook campaign performed well, with Webster University Online Learning Center's Facebook post accounting for ~43% of the total reach. Kansas City Metro, Irvine Metro, and National Capital region all accounted for a combined ~56% of total reach. Together, these posts accounted for a combined ~99% of total reach.

In addition to the Facebook campaign pushes, Webster University's Online Admissions team sent an email to potential students using Constant Contact. Individuals targeted in this email are those who Webster University has contact information from. Webster University's

Online Admissions team reported that 5,165 emails were sent using Constant Contact, with an open rate of 48.6% and a click rate of 8.6%, meaning that of the total number of emails sent, 48.6% were opened, and 8.6% of those emails resulted in a click on the link to take students to the signup page for the webinar. This nets a total of 2,531 individuals who saw the email without deleting it.

All information linked students to a particular webpage with further information about the Cybersecurity webinar. Google Analytics was used to track activity on this page. The total number of visits to the page with signup information was 823.

There were two information sessions held. Each information session offered the ability to RSVP for the event. The information session on 11/27/2018 recorded 41 RSVPs with 18 in attendance. The information session on 11/28/2018 recorded 43 RSVPs, with 19 in attendance. Between the two information sessions, there were a total of 84 RSVPs, and 37 in attendance.

There is no available data for enrollment as of the time of this reporting.

The total funnel generated from the Cybersecurity campaign is as follows. Without conversion data, it is not possible to generate the conversion rate of this campaign, though all other phases of the campaign are trackable.

Table 14

Total Funnel Data

	Reach	Traffic	Leads	Attendance	Conversion
	36,017	823	84	37	-

% of previous	-	2.29%	10.21%	44.05%	-
% of reach	100%	2.29%	0.23%	0.10%	-

Evaluation

The Cybersecurity Information Session webinar case study included a formal communication plan. This communication plan informed many of the processes related to this campaign. Though there were still weaknesses in the execution of the campaign, the communication plan appears to have made a difference in the *overall* execution of it. Scoring of the campaign based on this research's rubric is as follows, with qualitative information following the rubric scoring table:

Table 15

Cybersecurity Campaign Rubric Grading

Implementation	1
Progress	1
Data	1
Resources	1
Timeliness	1
Reach	3
Traffic	2

Leads	3
Conversion	0
Budget	1
Goals	1
Success	1
Total	**16**
Grade	**C**

Implementation: 1 point

Implementation refers to the efforts that go into starting the campaign. As noted earlier, implementation reports or an official project kickoff help to start the campaign project off on the right foot. While there was some communication early in the process since Global Marketing and Communication wasn't going to be a part of this particular campaign, having a formal kickoff meeting to express and document expectations and roles would have increased the score in this area.

Progress: 1 point

There were no documented check-ins by the various teams, with no reporting of how the campaign was progressing. In some cases, Facebook posts were made late, or not boosted at all. Having progress reports would have helped to improve the communication, and would have increased the score in this area.

Data: 1 point

While there was an increase in data tracked in the Cybersecurity campaign over the Legal Huddle campaign, data reporting was delegated to those individuals who have a stake in ensuring that data reports were in their favor. While there was no evidence that individuals changed their data to reflect better performance, it is still an aspect that needs to be evaluated.

Not all sites reported data, as Webster University's Downtown location did not report data. In addition, not all sites reported the same data, as there were no standards for data reporting. Some location reported gender breakdown, some reported age breakdown, some reported location breakdowns, while some even reported how the ads were shown.

Having data standards driven by somebody who is responsible for retrieving such data would have increased the score in this area of the rubric.

Resources: 1 point

This campaign included limited resource planning, and not all resources were effective in their tasks. For example, not all locations were contacted to boost their posts in a timely manner. Additionally, not all graphic design assets were delivered in a timely manner. While the execution of the campaign still resulted in passable results, better resource management would have resulted in a higher score in this area.

Timeliness: 1 point

This section is related to the preceding section on Resources. Not all tasks were completed on time. As stated, not all assets were delivered in a timely manner. Additionally, not all posts were boosted, and not all posts were made in a timely manner to facilitate larger reach. Additionally, there was no documentation stating when steps needed to be done by. Having tasks done in a timely manner would have increased the score in this area.

Reach: 3 points

Reach for this particular campaign was adequate based on the scoring of the rubric. Individual post reaches could have been higher through timely postings and post boosting, but the rubric only accounts for the reach of the campaign overall.

Traffic: 2 points

Traffic generated as a result of this campaign was adequate. Additionally, the flyers that were printed were given to organizations that were local to each location. It is not possible to know the traffic generated through use of these tactics. Having more traffic directed to the webpage for this event and being able to track data from the printed material would have resulted in a higher score.

Leads: 3 points

Leads generated for this event exceeded expectations, despite the challenges with having posts made in a timely manner and having all posts boosted.

Conversion: 0 points

There was not conversion data tracking. It was also reported that there were no admissions services made available during the sessions to offer registration to the Cybersecurity academic program.

Budget: 1 point

A clear budget was laid out at the outset of the project. Not all locations reported budget usage. Additionally, budget usage was set aside for Peterson Air Force Base, which ended up not running the campaign, while National Capital Region ended up running the campaign, but were not in the initial communication plan.

Goals: 1 point

This campaign did exceed some objectives (goals) and did not hit others. The goals of the campaign were to raise awareness of the Cybersecurity programs, to inform potential students of the market, and drive enrollments into these academic programs. While some of these goals were realized and documented, the goals were further broken down into the following objectives, with related notes.

- Run a three-week campaign for a webinar in November in order to positively affect enrollment for Spring 2019 classes. – Not all sites ran the entire three-week campaign.
- Reach 10,000 potential students through advertising in various formats for each region. – Total reach was 36,017, much more than the stated 10,000 reach.
- 50 RSVPs for online webinar. – Total RSVPs was 84, much higher than the original goal.
- 25 attendees – Total attendees was 37, higher than the original goal.
- 2 enrollments into one of the Webster University Cybersecurity academic programs. – No enrollment data was made available, and no admissions services were made available to potential students.

Success: 1 point

Overall project success is driven by both qualitative and quantitative measures. Given the lack of admissions services (and therefore conversion data), but the overall higher reach and attendance of the webinars and lack of project management, this project was both successful in some areas, and unsuccessful in other areas. Scoring in this area would have increased with a focus on conversion and better project management, which would have raised scores in other areas of this campaign as well.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Campaigns designed to raise awareness of, and increase enrollment in, specific academic programs remain a strategy employed by academic institutions. When campaigns are executed with the presence of a formal communication plan, they become more effective in achieving institutional goals. This research illustrates that the presence of a formal communication plan does indeed make campaigns more effective in a variety of ways.

By having stated goals and objectives developed within a communication plan, effectiveness can be measured. Without the presence of goals and objectives, it is difficult to measure effectiveness. Having these documented within the campaign's communication plan not only helps with measurement and assessment, but it also highlights areas which can be improved upon for subsequent campaigns.

A formal communication plan identifies key publics and key stakeholders that need to take part in the campaign. By formalizing the key publics and stakeholders, communication is both wider in scope by having come from multiple internal channels, and more targeted through being delivered to key publics associated with multiple internal channels.

Next, this research also highlighted shortcomings of both campaigns and identified needs that go beyond the simple need for implementing a communication plan. Successful execution of a communication plan requires project management processes. Even while the Cybersecurity case study performed better at achieving stated goals with the presence of a communication plan, it still did not perform as well as intended. There were major milestones and tasks missed due to poor project management. In order to accurately measure the performance of a communication plan's strategies and tactics, the campaign must be run well from a project management perspective. Without project management processes, data is lost, and may even be corrupted by the poor project execution.

Regarding reporting, qualitative data remains key to assessment of campaign effectiveness. When data is missing, or when data is reported by those who have a stake in reporting favorable data, true results may be difficult to measure. It is important, within project management processes, to identify an individual who is responsible for accurate data retrieval.

It is also important to engage the group that will be responsible for enrollment and admissions early in the process. If the main objective is to increase enrollments, then they need to not only be a part of the process, but also be available during the information sessions to facilitate enrollment into the programs. Even while the Cybersecurity campaign scored better than the Legal Huddle campaign, it was not possible to measure conversion rates (enrollment in the stated academic program), because admissions was not present at the information session to facilitate enrollment.

By implementing a formal communication plan, campaigns for academic programs are made more effective at reaching institutional goals. However, it was found that implementing project management processes could further increase project success rates, as proper project management would help ensure timely task completion. It is recommended that follow-up case studies be performed to measure the effectiveness of academic program campaigns

Additionally, further development of the rubric used for this research should be considered. The rubric developed through this research for the purposes outlined does not assess or message the usage or effectiveness of specific strategies that organizations may implement. By including the assessment of organizational strategies, individual campaigns can be assessed against institutional goals. Thus, further development of the rubric should be considered.

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Appendix

Applicable Courses

MEDC 5000 – Media Communications

This course was the introductory course to the Master's in Communication Management academic program. This course discussed the broad topic of media communications. Of particular interest and application was the idea that individuals bring their own meaning when interacting with a communication. In personal communication, each individual adds meaning to the communication. In the case of mass communication, an individual doesn't add meaning to the communication itself, but brings meaning with them. Baran and Davis (2014) state that selective perception is "the idea that people will alter the meaning of messages, so they become consistent with preexisting attitudes and beliefs." Knowing that individuals will bring their own meaning and perceptions to an interaction with mass communication informs the way in which messages are written.

MEDC 5300 – Strategic Communications

Several aspects of this course stick out. First is the introduction to the Interbrand Best Brands yearly report. This report highlights what each of the world's strongest brands is doing well, and what some of them could be doing better. Having this as a guide while researching individual companies' goals, objectives, and strategies within the context of strategic organizational communications provided a strong base from which to consider how goals and objectives are affected by an organization's strategic communications. This course connected strategies and tactics to organizational goals within the context of strategic communication.

MEDC 5400 – Media Production Management

This course included a deep dive into the strategic planning process for running campaigns, including an in-depth look at communication plans themselves. This course brought to light the difference between a formal communication plan, and a business plan, but also how they interact with each other. The content from this course had a deep impact on the content of this research. Understanding how marketing and advertising work together under the umbrella of public relations brought out the strategic nature of public relations, and how communication plans are the physical manifestation of goals and strategies of an organization. Examining the strategies and goals of specific campaigns helped to solidify the utility of documented communications strategies and tactics. Gaining a deep understanding of how strategies inform tactics is broadly applicable, even beyond planning formal communication plans.

MNGT 5000 – Management

This course was an introduction to management within organizations. It highlighted management structures, and included the need for organizations to respond to change in today's market. Of particular interest was the idea that an organization's bureaucracy can be one of its strengths. The idea that tasks need to belong to titles, and not to individuals, is particularly important. Equally important is the fact that organizations need to arrange their bureaucracy to respond to change. Being able to dive deep into organizational behavior and research Agile Organizational Models and group dynamics helped to inform a solid understanding of utilizing design sprints as a way to positively affect organizational change and provides a practical vehicle for creating many articles needed for communications plans.

MRKT 5000 – Marketing

This course was an opportunity to see how brands and organizations utilize different aspects of the marketing process to bring value to the marketplace. Each week was an opportunity to review a different business through a weekly case study. Each case study revealed distinct aspects of how businesses bring value to the market in terms of their own processes and communications and how they influence other businesses and sectors that they may not belong in.

For example, Home Depot integrated their retail solution by offering both physical locations and online research and shopping. They were not separate but connected to the same experience. An individual can research and order online or through their phone, and then pick up their goods in the closest physical location. This builds trust and brand loyalty. Recently, the market has seen Capital One do the same by opening Capital One Cafes around the nation

(Bizjournals.com, 2018). This is a practical example of how what was learned in this course can be applied to understanding recent marketing news and events.

PBRL 5323 – Organizational Communications

This course went deeper into the communication plan, requiring a formal communication plan as a final project. This was another course with a deep impact on the research and learning that went into this particular project. This course brought each of the pieces of the formal communication plan, and how they interact full-circle. Understanding key messaging, and how it interacts with organizational values was a key learning opportunity. Included in this course was the opportunity to write an execute a formal survey. It made the value of a well-written survey apparent and informed the need for a simple survey as part of the information session apparent as well.